

The Judgment of the late  
**LORD CHIEF JUSTICE**  
**Sir Matthew Hale,**  
 Of the Nature of  
**TRUE RELIGION,**  
 THE  
**CAUSES of its CORRUPTION,**  
 And the *Churches Calamity, by Mens*  
**ADDITIONS and VIOLENCES:**  
 With the desired Cure.

In three Discourses, written by himself at several times.

Humbly Dedicated to the Honourable Judges and Learned Lawyers, who knew and honoured the Author, because in their true Sentiments of Religion, and its Depravations, and the Cure, the welfare of *England*, under his Majesty, as well as their own, is eminently concerned.

By the faithful Publisher, *RICHARD BAXTER.*

To which is annexed the Judgment of Sir *Francis Bacon* Lord *Vernlam St. Albans*, and Chancellour of *England*: And somewhat of Dr. *Isaack Barrows* on the same subject.

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Mat. 5. 9. *Blessed are the Peace-makers; for they shall be called the Children of God.* Rom. 14. 17, 18. *The Kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness and peace, and joy in the holy ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God, and approved of men.*

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# A

## P R E F A C E,

With some Notes on these Discourses by the Publisher.

**T**He Publishing of these Discourses sheweth the great mutability of such weak understandings as my own: Till very lately no Price could have hired me to Publish them, lest it were a Violation of his Testament, which saith that he [would have no Writings of his Published, but what in his Life Time he gave to be Published]; And he delivered not these in his Life Time to me. In my ignorance this satisfied me. But lately opening the Case to some Lawyers of known Eminence, Honour, and Integrity, they have convinced me that I cross his Will, and the Common good, by my Suppressing them.

The Case is this: When he was gone from us in great Weakness to the Place of his Death, in my last Letter to him, I told him how much good the Lord Bacon's Book called Considerations of Matters Ecclesiastical had done, with many that too justly suspect Clergy Contenders of Partiality; and that the Honour and just Esteem that God had given him with all sorts of Men he owed to the Service of him that gave it:

And

## The Preface to the Reader.

*And therefore knowing the doleful Case of this Land, as divided and striving about Religion, I intreated him that he would Write his Judgment briefly and freely of the Cause and Cure: The rather because his Contemplations were so acceptable to many.*

*In his last Letter answering this, He professeth that those Contemplations were Printed without his Purpose, Knowledge, or Consent, but thank God if they did good, though beyond his intent. But though the rest be full of kindness, I will not Publish it, lest really it should violate his Will. But when he was dead, he who Published his Contemplations, shewed me a Bag of his Manuscripts, small occasional Tractates, and gave me out these three, saying, that They were directed [For Mr. Baxter] By which I knew they were by him given me in answer to my foresaid Letter, which Craved the Publication of his Judgment of our Divisions. But I conjecture they had been long before written by him at several Times, and much to the same purpose; and so I suppose that he gave them me, and left the use of them to my Discretion. Now say these Learned Lawyers, "A man may have several Wills in Writing in reference to several Things, not repugnant but consistent, and "all shall stand and be taken as his last Will, and may make several Executors, and give them several distinct Powers. And "clausula generalis non porrigitur ad ea quæ Specialiter "nominantur, And this Direction to you on that Occasion, "maketh it a Legacy bequeathed to you: And the answering "your Letter by it sheweth to what use: And his after like- "ing of the publishing his Contemplations, sheweth that he "was not utterly against appearing in Print.*

*By this and much more they Satisfie me, that it was my Ignorance that made me resolve to Conceal them.*

*I confess the Deliverer thought it best for me to make one Treatise out of them all, Because being not intended for Publication at the Writing of them, the same thing is repeated,*

## The Preface to the Reader.

specially in two of them. And that Repetition and the Brevity made me long undervalue them.

But I take it as an intollerable piaculum to put any altering hand of mine to the Writings of such a Man ; which I profess I have not done in adding, expunging, or changing one Word (Save some false spelling of the Scribe : for only the Latin Verses, and an enterlining or two, are his own hand ; which I know by many a Sheet that I have had from him.)

And as long as the Occasion of the Writing them is known, I think it no dishonour to them to have these Repetitions : At least not so much as my alterations would be : For it is useful ; first, as fully shewing the Readers, that these are no hasty crude conceptions, but matters that long and deeply dwelt in his heart. 2. And Great matters, specially to dull or unwilling, or negligent Readers or hearers, must be oft repeated ; for a Transient touch passeth away from such without any Effect. O that the matter of these three Papers were Written and spoken an hundred times, if it would make Rulers, and Teachers, and People once truly to consider and receive them as they deserve.

Set upon oft perusal I find that the Repetition is joyned with variety of inference and Application : And he bath too Queasy a Stomach that will Nauseate them in so short discourses on so great a Subject, so necessary to a People dissolving by wilfull Divisions, by the delusion of Abaddon that is commonly Painted with a Cloven Foot.

I shall add the Contents for the Readers help. But I shall not presume to animadvernt on the matter, save in these few Notes.

1. Tract. 1. pag. 3. I suppose by [Common assistances] he megneth not that which All men have : But which is not Miraculous, and all that rightly seek may hope for.

P. 7. Some of the Controversies which he Judged undeterminable, I have Cause to think be at lefft came nearer

## The Preface to the Reader.

to satisfaction in, after the Writing of these Papers, as he signified to me on some Discourse, specially after the reading my Catholick Theology.

*Ib.* Among the Points not distinctly knowable without more Revelation than we yet have of it, one is [what is the Real Consequence of the Baptism of Infants or its Omission]. But the Act of Uniformity Ejected all the Ministers of England, that would not publickly, declare that they Assent and Consent, that [It is CERTAIN BY THE WORD of God, that Infants baptized, dying before actual Sin, are UNDOUBTEDLY saved] (none excepted). Had the Convocation but cited that Word of God that saith this, this Good man might have been kept from taking that as unknowable, which every Conforming Minister in the Church is Certain of, as an undoubted Article of Faith. And it would have been a great kindness to the silenced Ministers.

Pag. 11. His preference of Episcopacy before all other Governments, was his real Judgment. But it was its Essentials and not all the Additionals that he meant. For to my knowledge he would have been glad of the Primitive Model of Bishop Usher, (Who was his much valued friend).

In the 3d. Tract. Pag. 17. the Scribe left an A—— for a word omitted, and I durst not supply it by Conjecture.

Who the Authors are that he so much blameth, specially the Dialogist, few will doubt, but I will not name, because by the Report of his good Preaching and Life, I cannot but hope that he Repenteth of it.

There is one S. T. that in an Invective against the Protestant Reconciler (a Book like this) and against Dr. Stillingfleet, insinuates that I am not to be believed in my Report elsewhere given of Judge Hales words, that [A new Act of Uniformity must heal England, &c. In these three Treatises this incredulous man may see much more than that, which may expugne his Unbelief: And lest any accuse me of Forge-

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## The Preface to the Reader.

ry, I hope to preserve the Manuscripts; and doubt not but the Lady Hale or Mr. Stevens hath a Copy of them. And because this Reverend Enemy to the Reconciler, (pleading for their Excommunication) was a Son of a Reverend Nonconformist (deceased) and lived sometime with me, at Kidderminster, and frequently walkt with me, and therefore may be thought to have known my incredibility; I ask him, why in all that time, [if he knew me to be a Lyar] would he never once tell me of it.

I take [Cursed be the Trimmers] and [Blessed are the Peace-makers] for direct contraries: And Christ to be Wiser and more credible than all the Enemies of Peace.

R. B.

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THE

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A sharp reproof of some late Writers against Dissenters, specially the Dialogist, as heinously abusing Scripture and Religion: far worse than Ben. Johnsons prophanie Play.

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O F

## P A R T . I.

O F

## R E L I G I O N.

*The Ends and Uses of it, and the Errors  
of Men touching it.*

T R U E Religion is the greatest *Improvement, Advantage, and Priviledge of Humane Nature*; and that which gives it the noblest and highest Pre-eminence above other visible Creatures.

We may observe in many Bruit Beasts and Birds admirable Instincts, Dexterities, and Sagacities; and in some of them some dark resemblances of Reason, or Ratiocination: But Religion is so appropriate to the *Humane Nature*, that there are scarce any sort of Men, but have *some Religion*: Nor do the most subtle or sagacious Bruits afford any signs thereof, as communicated to their Natures.

It is one of the chiefest Mercies and Blessings that Almighty God hath afforded to the Children of Men, and that which signally manifests his Providential Care to-

B wards

wards and over them, that in all Ages and among all Nations he hath given to them *some Means and Helps* to discover unto them, though in different Degrees, some principal Sentiments of true Religion: 1. By the secret Characters, and *Impressions*, and Structures thereof in their Minds and *Consciences*. 2. By his *Glorious* and admirable *Works*, commonly called the *Works of Nature*. 3. By signal *Providences*, and *Providential Regiment* of the World. 4. By raising up *Men* in all Ages of *great Wisdom*, *Observation*, and *Learning*, which did instruct the more ignorant in this great Concernment, the Rudiments of Natural Religion. 5. By *Traditional* Transmission of many important Truths and Directions of Life, from Ancestors to their Posterity, and others: Though in process of time evil Customs and evil Men did in a great measure impair and corrupt the Sentiments and Practices of Men, notwithstanding these helps. Therefore the same Mercy and Goodness of God; for the preservation and propagation of the true Religion, was pleased to substitute a more fixed and permanent means; namely, the *Holy Scriptures*, or *Divine Revelations*, committed to Writing in the Books of the Old and New Testament. Though the Religion delivered in both Testaments, be in substance the same; yet the true Religion was more fully, and plainly, and distinctly delivered by Christ and his Apostles in the New Testament, together also with some additional Instructions, for the better preservation and propagation thereof to Mankind, and divers additional Evidences to prove and manifest the truth of this Religion, to procure its belief and acceptation: As the Birth, *Miracles*, Death, *Resurrection*; and *Ascension* of Christ Jesus, the great Reformer of the Jewish, and great Institutor of the Christian Religion, so called from Christ that taught and asserted it. The Christian Religion is the most perfect Rule of our Duty to God, our selves, and

and others ; and was designed principally for these Great Ends.

1. To restore to the Glorious God, the Honour, Duty, and Obedience of his Creature, Man ; teaching him to Know, to Glorifie and Serve his Creator, to be Thankful to him, to submit to his Will, to obey his Law and Command , to be thankful for his Mercies, to acknowledge him in all his ways, to call upon him, to Worship him , to depend upon him, to walk sincerely in his sight, to admire and adore his Greatness and Goodness in all his works , especially in the great work of the Redemption of Mankind by his Son Christ Jesus.

2. To enable Man to attain everlasting Happiness, the perpetual Vision of the Glorious God, and to fit and prepare him to be a partaker of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light and Glory.

3. To compose and settle Mankind in such a decent and becominge reftitude, order, and deportment in this World, as may be suitable to the Existence of a Reasonable Nature, and the Good of Mankind : Which consists principally in a double relation: 1. To a Mans self, Sobriety. 2. To others, which consists in those two great Habits or Disposition beneficent to Mankind , viz. Righteousness, or Justice and Charity, or Love and Beneficence.

These three Great Ends are succinctly delivered, Tit. 2. 11, 12. For the Grace of God, that bringeth Salvation hath appeared unto all men, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live Soberly, Righteously, and Godly in this present World. Here we have these three Ends of Christian Religion. 1. Godliness, or our Duty to God. 2. Salvation, or our own everlasting Happiness. 3. Sobriety, Righteousness, which also includeth Charity, a part of Evangelical Righteousness.

And because Christian Religion was intended and insti-

tuted for the good of Man-kind, whether Poor or Rich, Learned or Unlearned, Simple or Prudent, Wise or Weak, it was fitted with such *plain, easie, and evident* Directions, both for things to be *known*, and things to be *done*, in order to the attainment of the End for which it was designed, that might be understood by any Capacity, that had the ordinary and common use of Reason or Humane Understanding, and by the common assistance of the Divine Grace might be practised by them.

The *Credenda*, or things to be known or believed, as simply necessary to those Ends, are but few, and intelligible, briefly delivered in that Summary of Christian Religion, usually called the *Apostles Creed*.

The *Agenda*, or things to be *done* or *forborn*, are those few and excellent Precepts, delivered by Christ and his Apostles, in that *little Book* of the *New Testament*; and yet even the tenth part of that *little Book* will contain all the Precepts of Christian Duty and Obedience contained in that Book: And in brief the *Baptismal Covenant*, (as it is contained in the Liturgy, and Explanation thereof in the Church Catechism used among us,) together with the Precepts of the Decalogue, contain in effect a Summary or brief Epitome of our Christian Duty.

And certainly it was necessary and becoming the Wisdom of the most Wise God, that that Religion and Doctrine, which equally concerned Men of all Kinds and Capacities, should be accordingly accommodated, as might be useful for all. If the Doctrine or Precepts of Christian Religion should have been delivered in over sublime or seraphical expressions, in high Rhetorical Raptures, in intricate and subtle Phrases or Stile, or if it should have been surcharged with multitude of particulars, it would have been like a Sealed Book, to the far greatest part of Mankind, who yet were equally concerned in the Business and End.

of Religion, with the greatest Philosophers and Clerks in the World.

Upon what hath been said, we may therefore Conclude,

1. That there is not, nor indeed may not be any great difficulty in the attaining of a *true saving Knowledge* of Christian Religion.

2. That the Duties of Christian Religion are not of so vast an Extent, but the Knowledge of them may be also attained by an Ordinary Capacity *willing to Learn*.

3. That Considering that God Almighty is never wanting with his Grace to Assist those that sincerely endeavour and Desire to Obey him and Serve him, it is not so Difficult a Busines to perform an Evangelical Obedience to the Precepts of the Gospel, I say an *Evangelical Obedience*, though not a *Perfect Obedience*; an Obedience that is *Sincere*, though many times *Weak*, and failings, which nevertheless are forgiven, and their Sincere though Imperfect Obedience accepted by Almighty God through the Merits and Intercession of Christ, and our own Humiliation and sincere Repentance for our failings.

And, 4. That when all is done, in *this Belief* and *this Obedience* Consists our *Christian Religion*. This is the One thing Necessary, the *Magnum Oportet*, which is of highest Concernment and greatest Importance to Mankind.

But now if we do but look about us in the World, and observe and consider the Matters, wherein Men for the *most part* do place, *Religion*, we shall find quite another kind of Rate and Nature of Religion than what Christ Instituted or intended, and yet all vaile and shrowded under the Name of *Christian Religion*; and greater weight and stress laid upon them than upon the *True, Real, grand Imports of Christian Religion*.

1. I shall begin with the Subtilties of great Scholars, Schoolmen, and Scholaſtick Divines. These have turned Christi-

Christian Religion into a most Curious and difficult Speculation, and that which was designed by Christ Jesus as a plain Direction to every Capacity, to be a Guide to a Righteous, Holy, and Sober Life here, and to attain Everlasting Life hereafter, they have [made] a meer exercise of Wit, and a Piece of greater subtlety than the abstrusest Philosophy or Metaphysicks. And this they have done principally these ways :

1. By Disputes about Questions, that, as they are not in themselves Necessary to be known, so they are in their own Nature Impossible for Humane Understandings to determine : As for instance ; many, if not all, the Points controverted between the Arminians and Calvinists, as touching the manner of the Decrees of God, what kind of Influence he hath upon the Wills of men. The manner of the Divine Knowledge of things Future, Contingent, or Possible. The Resistability or Irrisistability of Divine Grace. The Nature of Eternity, and Infinitude, and Indivisibility. The manner of the Existence of the Three Persons in the Unity of Essence. The Nature of Angels and Spirits ; the Manner and Degrees, and Method of their knowledge of things ; their several Ranks and Orders ; and infinite more Speculations and Disputes of things that do not in their own Nature fall under the discovery of a Humane Understanding, by the ordinary Course of Ratiocination, and are impossible to be known further than they are distinctly revealed by Almighty God, and as it were industriously kept Secret by Almighty God, because they are not of use to Mankind to be known. It is far more possible for a Child of three years old to have a true Conception of the most abstruse Points in Philosophy, or in the Mystical Reasons of State or Politick Government of a Kingdom, than for the Wisest man that ever was, without Revelation from God, to have any tollerable Conception or Notion of things of this Nature with any tollerable Certainty or Evidence.

2. Again

2. Again there are other Points disputed which are of a lower alloy, and yet not to be distinctly known without more clear Revelation than we yet have of it, nor yet of any Necessity for us distinctly to know: As for instance, Concerning the *Nature and Manner of Transmission of Original Sin*; How far the sins of immediate or remote Parents affect their Posteriority with Guilt or Punishment; The Origination of the Humane Soul; How far the Efficacy of the *Sacrifice of Christ was intentionally for all Men*; Concerning, the *Means of Communion thereof to Infants, Idiots, and the invisible Ignorant*; What is the real Consequence of Baptism of Infants, or its Omission; How far the *Will of man is Operative to his Conversion, or Perseverance;* Wherein the *formal Nature of Justification Conflicts;* How far forth *Faith singly is sufficient for it, without Sanctification and Habitual Holiness at last,* and how far forth the *Sincere Love of God by a person invisibly ignorant of many or most Points of Christian Religion is sufficient thereunto;* Concerning the *Estate of the separate Soul before the last Judgment,* and how far it enjoys the *Beatifical Vision before the Resurrection.*

Disputes touching these and the like difficult Questions, have blown up mens Fancies with Speculations, instead, of filling their Hearts with the true and genuine Effects of Christian Religion.

It is true, that Physicians and Naturalists do and may make Inquiries into the Method and Progress of *Generation, and Digestion, and Sanguification,* and the motions of the *Chile, the Blood, the Humours:* For, 1. They have means of access to the discovery thereof by Dissection and Observation. And, 2. It is of some use to them in their Science, and the Exercise thereof. But when all is done, a man of a sound Constitution digests his Meat, and his Blood Circulates, and his several Vessels and Intrails perform their offices, though he

he know not distinctly the Methods of their Motions and Operations. But these Speculations above-mentioned, in Points of Divinity, as they are not possible to be distinctly determined with any certainty, so they are of little use to be known.

If the heart be seasoned with the true knowledge of the things that are revealed, and with the Life of the Christian Religion, and the love of God, it will be effectual enough to order his Life, and bring him to Everlasting Happiness, though he be not, like an exquisite Anatomist, acquainted with a distinct Comprehension or Knowledge of the several difficult Inquiries of this Nature. Believe what is required by the Word of God to be believed, and do your Duty, as by that Word is directed; so that the Life of Religion, and the love of God be once set on foot in the Soul, and there nourished, and commit your self to the Faithfulness and Goodness of God, and this will be effectual to the great End of Religion, though all these Disputes be laid aside.

3. Again, A Third mischief of *Schollsticks*, is in relation to *Practicicks*: 1. Some *Casuistical Divines* have so distinguished concerning Religious External Duties, that they have left little Practical Religion or Morality in the World, and by their subtle curious Distinctions, have made almost every thing Lawful, and with the *Pharisees*, in the time of our Saviour, have made void the Laws of God, (and of Man also) by their Traditions and Distinctions: So that Religion towards God, and all Righteousnes and Sobriety, is so thin and narrow, and subtile, that by their Doctrine of *Probability*, and *Casuistical Distinctions*, all the Bones thereof are loosned. It would be too long to give Instances in particular: The late Velitations in *France* between some of the Popish Priests and Jesuites furnish the World with instances enough of this kind.

2. The

2. The Second Instance is this, *The turning of the greatest part of Religion into Politick Contrivances, for attaining or upholding Power, Wealth, or Interest.*

There have been Instances many in this kind among Secular Princes and States. This was the act of *Jeroboam* to set up Idolatrous Religion in *Samaria*, for preventing a return of the Ten Tribes to the House of *David*. And we may observe it in most of the Religion established by Heathenish Princes, which was so ordered to accomodate their Interest, though to the extreme corrupting of Natural Religion.

But there is not so eminent an Instance thereof in the whole World, as that of the *Ecclesiastical State of the Church of Rome*, who have corrupted, as much as in them lies, the most pure and innocent Religion that ever the world knew, namely, the Christian Religion, by distorting it to Ends of *Wealth and Power*, and appendicating to it certain new *Doctrines* and *Practices* merely to those Ends. And not only so, but have laid the greatest weight of *Religion* in the Observation of these *Politick Appendications*; so that a man, that either questions or not observes these *Politick Additaments*, runs as severe a Censure and Danger among them, as he that denies the most unquestionable Principles of Christian Religion. Such are their *Doctrines* of the *Popes Supremacy*, the *Popes Infallibility*; the *necessity to Salvation* to be of the *Romish Church*, the *Adoration of Images*, *Saints departed*, and *Angels*; the *Veneration of Reliques*; the *Doctrine of Purgatory*, *Indulgences*, and the *Church Treasury* of *redundant Merits*; the *Doctrine and Practice of Dispensations* and *Indulgences*; their *Canonization of Saints*; their *Pilgrimages*, *numerous Ceremonies*, *Theatrical Spectacles*; their *Doctrine of Transubstantiation*, and divers other Superadditions and Appendications to Christian Religion, which any person, not captivated by them, may with half an eye per-

ceive to be invented and continued meerly for the support of the Grandure of an Universal Monarchy, which they miscall *The Church*, and for the amassing of *Wealth and Power* for the support of it, as might most easily be evinced by the particular Examination of all those Politick Appendixes.

And yet let any man observe it, he shall find as great a fervour for the upholding of these Doctrines and Practices, and as great a *jealousie* of the least breach made upon them, as if the whole Concern of Christian Religion, and the Salvation of Souls lay in their Belief and Observance.

3. The third Instance is in relation to the *Forms of Church Government and Ceremonies*. That Ecclesiastical Government is necessary for the preservation of Religion, is evident to any reasonable and considerate man: and that the *Episcopal* Government constituted in *England*, is a most excellent Form of Ecclesiastical Government, and exceeds all other Forms of Ecclesiastical Government, may be easily evinced; and that it is the best adapted to the Civil Government in this Kingdom, is visible to any intelligent person: And yet I do not think that the Essence of Christian Religion Consists in *this or any other particular Form of Government*. It is a great help to the preservation of it in its Purity and Unity, and may be well called *Sepimentum Religionis Christianæ*, as the Jews call their Oral Traditions *Sepimentum Legis*, the Fence of the Law. But a man may be a good and excellent Christian under *this or any other Form* of Ecclesiastical Government, nay in such places where possibly there is no settled Form of Ecclesiastical Government established.

But if we observe many persons in the world, we shall find some so highly devoted to *this or that particular Form of Government*, as if all the weight of Christian Religion lay in it: Though the wise and sober sort of Conformists know and

and profess this, yet there be some rash people that will presently Un-church all the Reformed Churches beyond the Seas which are not under *Episcopal Government*. That if they see a man, otherwise of *Orthodox Principles*, of a *Pious* and *Religious* life, yet if scrupling some Points of *Ecclesiastical Government*, though peaceable, they will esteem him little better than a *Heathen or Publican*, a *Schismatick, Heretick*, and what not: On the other side, if they see a man of great fervour in asserting the *Ecclesiastical Government*, observant of *External Ceremonies*, though otherwise of a *loose and dissolute life*, yet they will be ready to applaud him with the Stile of a *Son of the Church*, and upon that account over-look the Miscarriages of his life, as if the *Essence* and *Life* of Christian Religion lay in the bare asserting of the best Form of Ecclesiastical Government.

On the other side, there is as great an Extremity of the other hand: there are many indiscreet persons, as well Divines as others, that having either by their *Education*, or by *Conversation* with Dissenters, or possibly to gain a Party, taken upon them the Patronage or Asserting of some other Form of Church-Government, either *Presbyterian* or *Independant*, or some thing fram'd by their own invention, presently cry down the Established Government of the Church, as Antichristian or Popish, and cry up that which they have thus espoused as the only true Christian Regiment instituted by Christ; and presently among them, and their Followers, this is made the discriminative Mark of a True Christian. If they see a man Conformable to the Established Government, tho' he be pious, sober, and truly Religious, yet they despise and neglect him, censure him as a Formalist, and without the Power of Godliness: But if a man will but revile the Established Government, and be bold against it, cry it down, and cry up the New Institution into which they are listed, tho' the man be Covetous,

Uncharitable, Hard-hearted, Proud, Impetuous, and possibly otherwife Loose in his Conversation, yet such a man shall be cherished, applauded, and cryed up for a Saint, a Precious Man, and Zealous for the Truth.

And although *Decent Ceremonies*, that are for the Preservation of the Dignity of Religion, and to keep due Order and Regularity, are not Essential Parts of Christianity, nor were ever so esteemed by wise and sober men, and yet are of use and convenience in the Church, nevertheless, we may easily observe among men the same Extremes as are before noted : some placing the whole weight of Religion in their strict Observance, and making them the *principal*, if not the *only Badge of a Son of the Church*, hating and despising those that scruple any thing in them, or that do not come up in every *punctilio* to their Observance, though they be otherwise sound in the Principles of Faith, pious and strict in their lives, just and honest to all men, and sober, temperate and blameless.

On the other side, there be a sort of men that place the greatest stress and discriminating Point of Christian Religion in opposing and decrying all *Instituted Ceremonies*, though *Innocent, Decent*, and without any the least touch of Superstition in them, yet these must be decried as Popish, Antichristian, destructive of Christian Liberty, and the Party that with most boldness and vehemence declaims against them, is valued by them as a most precious man, a man of zeal and courage, and needs little else to justify and magnifie him with his Party.

On the other side, though a man be of an holy and conscientious life, sound in Principles, sober, blameless, peaceable ; yet if he observe these blameless Ceremonies, though with great moderation and Charity to Dissenters, he shall be slighted and undervalued, esteemed a Formalist, a Time-server, or at best, a man wanting Courage, Zeal, Lukewarm,

Lukewarm, Timorous, and wanting the Power of Godliness. Such wild and wrong Measures do men of Extremes on all hands take of the true Essence and Ends of Christianity.

4. Again, even among Professors of the Protestant Religion, there are divers disputed and Controverted Points ; as between the *Calvinists* and *Arminians*, especially touching the *Universality* of the *Redemption* by Christ, *Perseverance* and *Falling from Grace* ; and almost every day there arise certain *new Opinions*, some of greater importance, but very commonly of small and incōsiderable moment; and these are taken up by the several Parties possibly agreeing in the same Fundamentals of Christian Religion. And sometimes they are entertained by a Party of men, because their Pastors are of that Opinion, or seem to be so ; though often they are taken up, or instilled into a Party, to make a discriminative Mark betweeen Persons of several Congregations. And then it is wonderful to see with what fervour each Party maintains his Tenent, and as great weight is laid upon it, as if the whole stres of Christian Religion, and the Salvation of the Souls of men lay upon it ; when God knows they are not of any moment in it.

Such was the old Controversie between the *Eastern* and *Western* Churches about *Easter-day*, and ancienter than that, in the Apostles times, about *Eating of meats offered to Idols*, and among us at this day touching the five *Arminian Questions*. And yet we shall see men as fervent and zealous about them, as censorious of Dissenters from them, as fond of those of the same Opinion with them, as if all the *Articles* of the Christian Faith were immediately concerned in them ; when all the while they are not of any moment to the Salvation of men, nor of any concernment to the Christian Religion, or the Ends thereof, but are only Artifices imposed upon men to hold up Parties, or to keep up some Man or Parties Reputation ; imaginations which

which men are fond of, because they are their own, at least theirs whom they have in great Veneration or Esteem.

5. Again, the fond Mistakes of men in this kind, are observable in very slight and trivial matters, which yet are entertained with a kind of Religious Veneration, when they serve to hold up Parties, or as discriminations of their Professions. Among the professed *Monks and Fryars* they have certain Habits assigned to several Orders, and as well anciently as now have several kinds of *Tonfures* of their Heads, which they observe with great severity; and place much Religion in them.

And even among the various Sects, or Perswasions among those that at least abhor Popery, yet we shall find some such *fond things* upon which they lay a great weight of their Religion: sometimes in very *Looks* and composing of their Countenance; sometimes in the manner or *Tone* of Expressions; sometimes in *affected Phrases*; sometimes in *Gestures*, sometimes in *Habits* and *Dresses*, sometimes in use of *Meats and Drinks* of one kind or another. I shall give some few Instances:

You shall have some that place a great point of Religion in forbearing the *eating of Flesh upon Frydays*, or in the time of *Lent*, but yet indulge themselves oftentimes in the eating of the choicest Fish, and the most costly Diet of other Meats: Others again think they must needs go as far on the other Extreme, Chusing those Seasons for Feasting upon Flesh, and think it acceptable to God, because it runs counter to the other Extreme.

Again, a time there was when it was thought that *long Hair* was unbecoming Professors of Christianity, and upon that account some did wear their *Hair* short, even to extremity. But about the beginning of the late Wars, many took up, as they thought, a more elevated way of Christianity, and as a Badge thereof wore their *Hair extreme Long*. The Conformists usually wear Gowns or Canonical Coats;

Many

Many of the Nonconformists by way of Discrimination use other Habits.

The former officiate, as the Canons require them, in Surplices, and sometimes with Hoods, and some are so taken with it, that they think the Offices want an Essential Part when performed without it ; some of the latter think the solemn Ordinances are profaned by it, and rendred Superstitious.

But among all the differing Perswasions among us, there are none that give a man more ample Evidence of Mistakes of this Nature, than those called *Quakers*, who place a great part of their Religion in keeping on their Hars, in using the words *Thee* and *Thou*, in stiling the Months and Days of the Week not according to the usual Appellation, but the first, or second month, or day, in certain Habits and Postures unlike other men ; in Silent Devotions at their Publick Meetings, in revileing and crying down the Established Ministry, Churches, Sacraments, *Lords-day*, and all manner of Forms, whether commanded or used by others ; in refusing to takean Oath when lawfully called thereunto ; and some such other singularities. Take away but these, and the like affected Superadditions, the men are as other men, some indeed very sober, honest, just and plain-hearted men, and found in most, if not all the important Doctrines and Practices of Christianity ; others (as it happens in all Proselitions) Subtle, Covetous, Uncharitable Tumultuous, Ignorant, proud Despisers of others, Slanderers, and yet as long as they conform to their *Sect* in these impertinent or unwarrantable singularities, they please themselves with the Stile of the *People of God*, and are for the most part esteemed such by those of that Sect.

By this little Survey, we may easily take an Estimate of the Mistakes of Mankind, and even among Christians, touching the Mistakes in point of Christianity, and Christian Religion,

Religion, and how common it is to misplace the *Name* of Christian Religion and the *Nature* of it, and attribute it to such things as in truth have nothing to do with it, but many times are directly contrary to it.

And yet even in these Impertinencies many men place the greatest moment of their Religion, and have as great and many times a greater zeal and fervour for them, than for the weighty Points and Duties of Christianity, and most of the business of many men Consists in Velitimations and Defences and Invectives about them; The Pulpits and the Pres is ingaged about them. Love, and Charity, and even common Humanity, and mutual Conversation between Man and Man, Church and Church, Party, and Party, is broken by the Mutual collisions and animosities concerning them. So that (the Lord be merciful to us and forgive us) there is as little love, and as great distance and animosity between many of the Dissenting Parties among Protestants, touching these Matters, as there is between Papists and Protestants, or between Christians and Infidels. And by this means the true Life of Christian Religion, and that which was the great End of its Institution, and the true genuine and natural Effect of it upon the heart and soul, and course of life, is lost or neglected by them that profess it, or disparaged among those that either have not entertained it, or at least entertained it as they do the Customs of the Country wherein they are educated. These men, when they see so much Religion placed by Professors of Christianity in these things, which every intelligent man values but as Forms, or Inventions, or Modes, or Artifices, and yet as great weight laid upon them, as great fervour and animosity used for or against them, as almost for any Points of Christian Religion, they are presently apt to censure and throw off all Religion, and reckon all of the same make.

But

But when all is done, true Christian Religion is a thing of another kind of Make, and is of another kind of Efficacy, and directed unto, and effective of a nobler End, than those things about which, as above is said, men so much contend, and that makes so great a bustle and noise in the world. As the *Credenda* are but few and plain, so the *Facienda*, or things to be done, are such as do truly ennable and advance the Humane Nature, and brings it to its due habitude, both to God and Man.

It teacheth and tutors the soul to a high reverence and veneration of Almighty God, a sincere and upright walking as in the presence of the Invisible, All-seeing God : It makes a man truly to love, to honour, to obey him, and therefore careful to know what his will is; it renders the heart highly thankful to him, both as his Creator, Redeemer, and Benefactor : It makes a man entirely to depend upon, to seek to him for guidance, and direction, and protection ; to submit to his Will with all Patience, and Resignation of Soul : It gives the law not only to his Word and Actions, but to his very Thoughts and Purposes, that he dares not entertain a very thought unbecoming the sight and presence of that God to whom all our thoughts are legible : It teacheth and bringeth a man to such a deportment both of external and internal sobriety, as may be decent in the presence of God and all his holy Angels : It crusheth and Casts down all Pride and Haughtiness both in a mans heart and carriage, and gives him an humble frame of soul and life, both in the sight of God and men : It regulates and governs the Passions of the Mind, and brings them into due moderation and frame: It gives a man a right estimate of this present world, and sets the heart and hopes above it, so that he never loves it more than it deserves: It makes the Wealth and Glory of this World, high Places, and great Preferments, but of a low and

little value to him ; so that he is neither covetous nor ambitious, nor over solicitous concerning the advantages of it : It brings a man to that frame that Righteousness, Justice, Honesty, and Fidelity is as it were part of his Nature ; he can sooner dye than commit or purpose that which is unjust, dishonest, or unworthy a good man : It makes him value the love of God and peace of Conscience above all the Wealth and Honours in the World, and be very vigilant to keep it inviolably : Though he be under a due apprehension of the love of God to him, yet it keeps him humble and watchful, and free from all presumption, so that he dares not under a vain confidence of the Indulgence, and Mercy, and Favour of God, turn aside to commit or purpose even the least injury to man, he performs all his Duties to God in sincerity, and integrity, and Constancy ; and while he lives on Earth, yet his Conversation, his Hopes, his Treasure, and the flower of his Expectation is in Heaven, and he entirely endeavours to Walk suitably to such a Hope : In sum, it restores the Image of God unto the Soul in Righteousness and true Holiness.

*Cempsitum jus, fasque animi sanctosque recessus  
mentis, & incoctum generoso peccus honesto.*

These, and the like to these, are the Ends, Design and Effect of True Christian Religion, truly received and digested in the Soul. And certainly any man that duly considereth, will find that they are of another kind of Nature and Value, than those sublime Speculations, Politick Constitutions, Forms or not Forms, affected Singularities, upon which many lay the weight of Religion, and for and touching which there is so much Contention and Animosity in the World. So that methinks men in this regard are like to a Company of foolish Boys, who when the Nut is broken

broken, run scrambling after the pieces of the Shell, and in the mean while the Kernel is neglected and lost.

Now touching the Reasons or Causes of these Misapprehensions touching Religion, they are various: some deserve compassion, and others are more or less excusable, according to their several kinds: 1. Some persons truly Conscientious and zealous of any thing that they judge to be displeasing to God, as not agreeable to his Will, and observing the many Corruptions, that the *Romish* Church have brought into the Worship of God, are very suspicious of any thing that may look, as they think, that way; and therefore, though they are otherwise men of sound and Orthodox Principles, and of a truly righteous, sober, and pious Life, yet perchance are transported somewhat too far in scrupling or opposing some Ceremonies or Forms; And possibly their Education and Conversation with men of such Perswasions have confirmed them in it, so that they do not oppose out of a frowardness or peevishnes of Mind, or out of Pride, or a Spirit of Opposition, but in the sincerity and simplicity of their hearts, and out of a tenderness for the Honour of God. These, though they are or may be mistaken in their Perswasions, yet certainly deserve *Compassion, Tenderness, yea and Love also, much rather than Severity or Contempt.*

2. Others again, observing that certain Modes and Forms, and the rigorous Observations of them, are the common road for *attaining Preferments* or Favours of great Persons, upon that account exercise a marvellous fervour of mind for them, and a vigorous opposition of all that come not up to them in every punctilio, that they may thereby be taken notice of, and employed as useful and fit and vigorous Assertors and Instruments for this purpose.

3. Many times *Gain and Profit* is the End and Design of many Practices and Positions appendicated to Christian Religion,

ligion, as is before observed in the *Romish Church*; and it is easily observable that Interest, Profit, and Temporal Advantage have a strong bias upon Mens Affections, and are dearer to them than the Truth of Religion, and carry men more vigorously in their upholding and maintenance, than Religion it self doth: And because the presence of zeal for Religion carries a fair Plausibility with all men, therefore those very things that are but *Engines of Gain and Profit* are Christned with the specious Name of Religion.

It was the making of Silver Shrines for *Diana*, the Art whereby the Artificers got their living, that made the Out-cry, *Great is Diana of the Ephesians*.

4. Again, it is very certain that mankind hath a huge kindness and partiality for matters of their own *Invention*, and set a greater rate upon them, than upon other matters handed over to them by others: And hence it comes to pass that a new Fancy or Opinion, a new Form of Worship, Discipline, or Government that, any man hath invented or studied out, is to such a man ordinarily of greater value and moment than it deserves, and shall be maintained with greater zeal, Fervour and Animosity, than Points of greater truth and moment, as if the great moment and weight of Religion and Christianity lay in it, which is in truth nothing else but the Effect of Self-love and Self-conceit.

5. Again, though by Nature Man be a sociable Creature, yet there is in most Men a certain Itch of Pride, which makes them affect a *Discrimination from others*, and to become a kind of *separated Party* more refined than the rest of the same Common Profession.

I do remember in the beginning of our late *Troubles*, the *only Party* that *visibly appeared*, were some that *desired some Reformation in Church-matters*: And when that Party had obtained, under the Name of the *Presbyterian Party*, in a very

very little while there arose a more sublime Party of men, called the Independant or Congregational men, which much despised the former, as not arrived to a Just Measure of Reformation. Shortly after that there arose a kind of *Lay Party*, which as much undervalued the Independant, and indeed the Ministry in general.

After that there arose a Party discriminating it self from all the former, *viz.* the *Quakers*. These various Parties were as so many Subdivisions and Rectifications of what went before.

Now the Means of holding up this *Discrimination of Parties* are certain *select Opinions, Practices, or Modes*, which are like the *Badges* or *Colours* that give each Party his Denomination, Distinction, and Discrimination: And consequently these Discriminative Badges have as great a rate set upon them as each Sect sets upon it self; and therefore must be upheld under the very Notion of the life of Religion, and must be maintained with the greatest fervour imaginable; for otherwise the Distinction of the Sects themselves would fall to the ground, and become contemptible both among themselves and others, because otherwise there would appear very little and inconsiderable reason, upon trifling or small reasons, to Separate and Divide from others, and to Un-Church and Un-Christen them that are not Their Company or Society.

## PART



## P A R T   II.

C O N C E R N I N G

## R E L I G I O N.

*The life of it, and Superadditions to it.*

**T**He Truth and Spirit of Religion comes in a narrow compass, though the Effect and Operation thereof are large and diffusive. *Solomon comprehended it in a few words, Fear God, and keep his Commandments, for this is the whole Duty of man:* The soul and life of Religion is the Fear of God, which is the Principle of Obedience; but Obedience to his Commands, which is an act or exercise of that life, is various, according to the variety of the Commands of God: If I take a Kernel of an Acorn, the Principle of life lies in it: the thing it self is but small, but the Vegetable Principle that lies in it takes up a less room than the Kernel it self, little more than the quantity of a small Pins head, as is easy to be observed by Experiment, but the exercise of that Spark of life is large and comprehensive in its Operation;

tion ; it produceth a great Tree, and in that Tree the Sap, the Body, the Bark, the Limbs, the Leaves, the Fruit ; and so it is with the Principle of True Religion, the Principle it self lies in a narrow compass, but the activity and energy of it is diffusive and various.

This Principle hath not only Productions that naturally flow from it, but where it is it ferments and assimulates, and gives a kind of Tincture even to other Actions that do not in their own Nature follow from it, as the Nature and Civil Actions of our lives. Under the former was our Lords Parable of a Grain of Mustard, under the latter of his Comparison of Leven, just as we see in other things of Nature. Take a little Red Wine, and drop it into a Vessel of Water, it gives a new Tincture to the Water ; or take a grain of Salt and put it into Fresh Liquor, it doth communicate it self to the next adjacent part of the Liquor, and that again to the next, until the whole be fermented : So that small and little vital Principle of the Fear of God doth gradually and yet suddenly assimilate the actions of our life flowing from another Principle. It rectifies and moderates our Affections, and Passions, and Appetites, it gives Truth to our Speech, Sobriety to our Sences, Humility to our Parts, and the like.

Religion is best in its Simplicity and Purity, but difficult to be retained so, without Superstrunctions and Accessions ; And those do commonly in time Stifle and Choke the Simplicity of Religion, unless much Care and Circumspection be used : the Contemperations are so many and so Cumbrous, that Religion loseth its Nature, or is strangled by them : Just as a man that hath some Excellent Simple Cordial or Spirit, and puts in Musk in it to make it smell sweet, and Honey to make it taste pleasant, and it may be Cantharides to make it look glorious. Indeed by the Infusions he hath given it a very fine Smell, and Tast, and Colour, but yet he hath so clogg'd it, and sophisticated it with Superadditions,

additions, that it may be he hath altered the Nature, and destroyed the Virtue of it.

The Superadditions and Superstrunctions in Point of Religion are very many, and from very many and various tempers in men that add them. As for Instance,

1. There is one common Superaddition that naturally all men are apt to bring into it, viz. that it may Gratifie the Sense; for in as much as the most powerful and immediate influence upon us comes from and through our Senses, and that spiritual and internal apprehensions have not so strong or constant an Impression upon us, they seem things at a distance, flat, and the Soul is weary of bearing it self upon them; men are apt to dress up Religion so as it may be grateful to the Sense: *Make us Gods that may go before us:* And this is the chief original of Idolatry, and also of Superstition.

2. There are other Superadditions that come even from the accidental Inclinations of men to some special matter which they value and love; and that they carry over into Religion; and many times mingle with it. As for the purpose, take a man greatly admiring natural Philosophy, he will be apt to mingle and qualifie Religion with Philosophical Notions. Many of those things of Aristotle that are harshly and dishonourably asserted concerning the Diety are from his tenacious adhering to certain Philosophical Positions that he had fixed upon.

Bebmen, who was a great Chymist, resolves almost all Religion in Chymistry, and frames his Conceptions of Religion suitable and conformable to Chymical Notions.

Socinus and his Followers, being great Masters of Reason, and deeply learned in matters of Morality, mingle almost all Religion with it, and form Religion purely to the Model and Platform of it.

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Many

Many great *Physicians* that have much observed the Constitutions of Mans Body, have figured to themselves Notions of the Soul conformable to the Results of their Observations in the Body.

And as thus in these sorts of men, so again men of *Metaphysical* and *Notional Brains* and Education, as the Schoolmen, they have conformed Religion and their Notions concerning it to *Metaphyficks*: and indeed have made that which is and ought to be the common Principle for the actuating of all men, yea even of the meanest Capacities, to be a meer Collection of Subtilties, far more abstruse than the most intricate and sublimated Humane Learning whatsoever.

Again, take a *Polititian*, or *States-man*, and he shall most easily conform Religion to *State Policy*, and make it indeed a most excellent and incomparable Engine for it, and nothing else.

And if we narrowly look upon the Method and System of Religion as it is formed by the *Romish Hierarchy*, it is a most exquisite piece of *Humane Policy*, and every thing therein suited with most exquisite Art and Prudence for the support of the Grandure and Interest of that State: This hath mingled with the Christian Religion the *Popes Infallibility* and *Supremacy*, his Power of *Pardonning* and *Dispensing*, his *Keys of Heaven and Hell*, his *Purgatory* and *Indulgences*, and *Images*, and *Adorations* of them, his *Reliques*, and *Pilgrimages*, and *canonizing* of *Saints*, and a thousand such kind of stuff most incomparably fitted to mens Passions and Affections; and so to support that most artificial and methodical Fabrick of the Popish State: for indeed it is no other.

And if we look into other Kingdoms and Places, we shall easily find that Religion is so stated and ordered as may best conduce to the peace, order, wealth, and amplitude of every

every Kingdom ; for wise Politicians, finding that Religion hath a great impression on mens minds, and therefore if it be not managed by the Policy of state, may prove an unruly Busines, if it be contemperated with Mixture prejudicial to the State, and that it may be a most excellent Engine if it can be managed and actuated for the Benefit of the State, do add to it much of their own, that it may be managed upon occasion, and they dress up Religion with *State Policy*, whereby in truth it becomes nothing else but a meer piece of *Humane Policy*, under the Name of Religion.

And on the other side, those either *politick* or *discontented* Spirits, that would put a Kingdom into Blood and Confusion, do mingle *Discontents*, and *Fancies*, and *Imaginations*, *Suspicions* and *Frowardness* with Religion, and call this confused mixture of Phancies and Passions, *Religion*: and manage and brandish this Weapon with mighty disadvantage to that State which they oppose.

For it is most apparent, that as nothing hath so great an impulsion upon men, as that which comes under the apprehension of *Religion*, in as much as it concerns the greatest good, even their Everlasting Souls and Happiness ; so nothing is of so universal Concernment as this, and therefore like to attract the most Followers ; for every man hath not an *Estate* to care for ; but every man hath a *Soul* to care for ; and hence it is that scarce any great Contest between Princes hath happened in these latter years, nor scarce any Commotion in a State, but *Religion* is owned on all sides ; and *God, and his Cause, and his Church*, owned on all hands, and therefore still the scramble is for *Religion*, and who shall keep the *Opinion of Religion* most firm to them, and therefore they on all hands infuse into the thing they call *Religion* those things that may most probably and politickly hold to their Party.

Again, in Contest among Clergymen, every one Trims and Orders

Orders Religion in that Dress that may most make it *their own*, and secure it to *themselves*.

Take the *Popish Clergymen*: hold what you will, if you hold not the *Supremacy* and *Vicarior* of the Pope, all the rest of your Religion is not worth a rush.

Come to the *Reformed Episcopal Clergy*: as to the *Popes Supremacy* they disclaim it: but if you acknowledge not *Episcopal Government*; if you swear not *Canonical Obedience* to your *Ordinary*, if you submit not to the *Liturgie*, and *Ceremonies*, and *Vestments*, and *Musick* used in the Church, you are at best a *Schismatick*.

Again, come to the *Presbyterian Clergy*, they will tell you *Episcopal Government* is *Romish* and *Superstitious*, and their *Ceremonies* and *Usages* *Antichristian Usurpations*; but if you mean to be of a warrantable Religion, you must submit to the *Presbyterian Government* as truly Apostolical.

Come to the *Independent*, he declaims against both the former, and tells you that the true Conformity to Apostolical Order is in the Congregational way.

Take the *Anabaptist*, and he tells you all the former are vain and irreligious, unless you will be *rebatized* and *lifted* in their Church.

Again, in Points of *Doctrine*, as well as Discipline, it is most plain that Tenents are professed or decryed for *distinction of Parties*: witness the Contest between the *Arminian Party* and the *Calvinistical Party*, which are only used as Methods on either side, to attract *Profeslytes*; and distinguish Parties: And in these and the like distinctions of Parties and Professions the Superstructures and Additions are in a manner incorporated and grafted into Religion, and in effect give the only Denomination to it; according to the various Interests and Affections of Parties; when in truth, the main business of these and the like Additions and Superstructures,

Superstructures, are but Policies to distinguish, and fortifie, and increase Parties.

3. There are some *Superadditions* to Religion, that though I do not think they are to be condemned, yet are carefully to be distinguished from the true and natural *Life of Religion*; and so long as they are kept under that apprehension, they may, if prudently applyed and managed, do good. But if either they are imprudently instituted, imprudently applyed, or inconsiderately over-valued, as if they were Religion, they may and many times do harm; and such are decent and inoffensive Forms in the External Worship of God appointed by the Civil Magistrate, by the advice of those that are deservedly eminent in the Church for their Piety, Learning, and Prudence. And there seems to be very good Reason for it.

1. Because if every man should be left to himself, there would Confusion ensue; because no man knew another's Mind, or Rule of his external Deportment.

2. All men have not that equal Prudence to Judge what were fit to be used: the Magistrate is like to make choice of those persons that are fitteſt to advise, and their Recommendations would be of greatest authority with others.

3. It is most certain, that Man being composed of Soul and Body, cannot so regularly and well fix himself to his Duty, without ſome justifiable help to his Devotion; ſuch are vocal Prayers, Kneeling, and other Gestures proper for the Matter of Worship which he intends.

And this may be one Reason, why the Lord, though he ſtrictly forbade all Idolatry and Superftition, and Heathenish Practice to the Jews, yet did appoint Sacrifices, Priests, a glorious Tabernacle, and the Ark, which was not only a diversion from the Egyptian Idolatry which they had ſeen, but also a help to their natural infirmity for the excitation of their Devotion.

And

And although our Lord Jesus came to *abrogate* even that *Indulgence*, and foretold that those that worshipped the Father, should worship him in *Spirit* and in *Truth*, under the Gospel, yet it is certain that the immediate Apostles of Christ did set certain orderly Observances in the Church for decencies sake : and it was justly allowable : As concerning the order of the exercise of their Supernatural Gifts, Concerning Womens speaking in the Church, concerning mens being covered in the Church, and Women vailed, concerning the manner and order of receiving the Sacrament, and the like.

But as there be Reasons for it, so there be Cautions to be used in it.

1. That they be not too *numerous*; for their Multitude will rather oppress than secure Religion.
2. That in their Natures they be not *Superstitions*, but keep as much distance from it as well may be; otherwise they will be in Religion, as the dead Fly in the Apothecaries Oyntment.
3. That they be clean and decent, not too full of *Pomp* or *Ostentation*: Ceremonies should be used as we use a Glafs, rather to *preserve* the Oyl, than to *adorn* it. Too much Pomp causeth Jealousies even in *good men*, of a degeneration either to Jewish Ceremonies or Popish Vanities.
4. That though such are not to be rejected because they are *Ancient*, so if they become *Unseasonable*, they are not to be held meerly because they are *Ancient*. It is with Ceremonies as with some other things that are fit to be changed when they become unuseful or offensive, as the *Love-Feasts*, *Extreme Unction*, and some other things, possibly practised, and fit enough, in the Primitive times : Many Ceremonies were at first invented and practised, to win over unconverted Heathens ; to incourage weak Christians, especially the Jews, who were not easily to be drawn from their

their Legal Ceremonies : But when People become a Knowing People, that see beyond those Ceremonies, and understand when, and why, and how they came in, then it were Prudence to dispense with, or change them.

5. That they be not urged with too much rigour or severity upon such as conscientiously refuse them. Charity to a weak Brother in things indifferent in their own Nature, is then to be exercised, when my Brother is offended therewith, or never: And if it be said it is his duty to submit to the Church, and not the Church to him ; I do think that answer will not serve in this case ; for surely though a Child owes a Duty to a Father, yet his neglect thereof, especially if it be upon a conscientious account, will not excuse the neglect of a Fathers Duty to his Child : The Apostle professed he would abstain from things lawful rather than offend his weak Brother.

6. And especially that we be careful to remember that Religion is another thing from these Ceremonies. These are of use, i. e. for Ornament ; They are the Dressings and the Trimmings of Religion at the belt, but the Fear of God is of a higher extraction.

It is a pitiful thing to see men run upon this mistake, especially in these latter times ; one placing all his Religion in holding the Pope to be Christ's Vicar, another placing Religion in this, to hold no Papist can be saved : One holding all Religion to consist, in holding Episcopacy to be *jure divino* ; another by holding Presbytery to be *jure divino* ; another in crying up Congregational Government ; another in Anabaptise ; one in placing all Religion in the strict observation of all Ceremonies ; another in a strict refusal of all : One holding a great part of Religion in putting off the Hat, and bowing at the Name of Jesus ; another judging a man an Idolater for it : and a third placing his Religion in putting off his Hat to none ; and so like a company of Boys that blow

Bubbles

Bubbles out of a Wall-nut-shell, every one runs after his bubble, and calls it Religion; and every one measures the Religion or irreligion of another, by their agreeing or dissenting with them in these or the like matters; and at best, while we scramble and wrangle about the pieces of the Shell, the Kernel is either lost, or gotten by some that doth not prize any of their Contests.

 Believe it, Religion is quite another thing from all these Matters: He that fears the Lord of Heaven and Earth, walks humbly before him, thankfully lays hold of the Message of Redemption by Christ Jesus, strives to express his thankfulness by the Sincerity of his Obedience, is sorry with all his soul when he comes short of his Duty, walks watchfully in the denial of himself, and holds no confederacy with any Lust or known Sin, if he falls in the least measure is restless till he hath made his Peace by true Repentance, is true in his Promise, just in his Actions; Charitable to the Poor, sincere in his Devotions, that will not deliberately dishonour God, though with the greatest security of impunity; that hath his hope in Heaven, and his Conversation in Heaven, that dare not do an Unjust Act though never so much to his advantage, and all this because he sees him that is invisible, and fears him because he loves him, fears him as well for his Goodness as his Greatness; such a man, whether he be an *Episcopal*, or a *Presbyterian*, or an *Independant*, or an *Anabaptist*; whether he wears a *Surplice*, or wears none, whether he hears *Organs*, or hears none, whether he Kneels at the *Communion*, or for Conscience sake stands or sits; he hath the *Life of Religion* in him, and that life acts in him, and will conform his soul to the Image of his Saviour, and walk along with him to Eternity, notwithstanding his *Practise* or *Non-practise* of these *Indifferents*.

 On the other side, if a man fears not the *Eternal God*, dares

dares commit any sin with presumption, can drink excessively, swear vainly or falsely, commit Adultery, Lye, Cozen, Cheat, break his Promises, live loosely, though he practise every Ceremony never so curiously, or as stubbornly oppose them; though he cry down Bishops, or cry down Presbytery; though he be re-baptized every day, or though he disclaim against it as Heresie; though he Fast all the *Lent*, or Feasts out of pretence of avoiding Superstition, yet notwithstanding these, and a thousand more external Conformities, or zealous Oppositions of them, he wants the Life of Religion.

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PARJ



## P A R T III.

OF THE  
CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

*The Superstructures upon it, and Animosities about them.*

**T**he Christian Religion and Doctrine was by the Goodness and Wisdom of God designed to be the common Means and Method to bring Mankind to their Chief End, namely, to know, and to serve, and obey, and glorifie, and everlastingely to enjoy Almighty God the Chiefeſt Good.

And to that end it was given out with all the Plainness and Perspicuity, with all Evidence and certainty ; a Doctrine and Religion containing Precepts of all Holinesſ and Purity, of all Righteousnesſ and Honesty, of all Longanimitie, Benignity, and Gentlenesſ, Sweetnesſ, Meeknesſ, and Charitiy ; of all Moderation and Patience, of all Sobriety and Temperance ; in brief, it is a Religion that is admirably and ſufficiently conſtituted to make a man, what indeed he ſhould be, Pious towards God, Just and Beneficent towards Men, and temperate in himſelf, fitted for a life of Piety, Honesty,

Honesty, Justice, and Goodness, and Happiness hereafter. Such is the Christian Religion, and such the men must be that are truly conformable to it; And if any man professing Christianity, be not such a man, it is because he comes so much short of his due Conformity to Christian Religion, and the most excellent Doctrine and Precepts thereof.

The Profession of this Religion is that which is, and for many Ages hath been, commonly made by a very considerable part of the known World, as the only true Religion given to the world by Almighty God, through his Son Jesus Christ, wherein and whereby they may expect everlasting Salvation.

But yet together with this Christian Religion, the Professors thereof have in several Ages and Places chosen to themselves various *adventitious accidental Superstructures, Additions, Opinions, Modes, and Practices*, which they have as it were incorporated into the Christian Religion by them professed, or appendicated unto it

And these Superstructures or Appendixes of Christian Religion have been introduced and entertained by various Means, and by various Designs, and to various Ends: Some by the Authority of great Names; Some by insensible gradations or long customs; some by a supposed congruity or incongruity; some for Order or Decency: Some for Discrimination of Parties; Some for Political Ends, appearing in themselves, or secretly carried on; some upon emergent occasions; either continuing or now ceasing; Some by Civil, some by Ecclesiastical Sanctions; Some by traditional Observations, either continued, or interrupted and revived; Some for Ornament; Some for Use; Some as supposed necessary consequents upon the Christian Doctrine, Some to be, *quasi septa & munimenta doctrinæ & religionis Evangelicæ*, as the Jewish Traditions were supposed to be the *Sepimenta Legis*; Some for one end, and some for another: And

And although these are not truly, and essentially parts of the Christian Religion, yet as the humours in the body are some good, some noxious, some innocent, though they are no part of the true vital blood, yet they mingle with it, and run along in it ; so these Superstructures, and Occasions, and Additions have in various Ages, Successions, and Places mingled with the true radical vital Doctrine and Religion of Christ, in mens Opinions, and Practices, and Professions.

And yet it is visible to any man that will but attentively observe the Courses of men professing Christian Religion, that the greatest fervour and animosity of the Professors of Christian Religion is not so much with respect to the substantials of Christian Religion, either in things to be believed or practised, as touching these *Additions* and *Superstructures* ; some as fervently contending for them, as if the life of Christianity consisted in them, some as bitterly and severely contesting against them, as if the life and soul of Christian Religion were not possibly consisting with them.

And by these means these unhappy Consequences follow.

1. That whereas the main of Christian Religion consists in the true belief of the Gospel of Christ Jesus, and the Practice of those Christian Virtues that he left unto his Disciples and Followers, both by his Example and Precept, namely love of God, Holiness and Purity of life, Humility and Lowliness of mind, Patience, Meekness, Gentleness, Charity, a low and easy Value of the World, Contentation of Mind, submission to the Will of God, Dependance upon him, Resignation unto him, and other excellent Evangelical Virtues, that perfect and rectifie the Soul, and fit it for an humble Communion with Almighty God in this life, and a blessed fruition of his Presence in the life to come ; the Christian Religion is not so much placed in these, as in an entire *Conformity to Modes and Circumstances*, or an extream Aversion :

fion from them. And according to the various Interests or Inclinations of Parties those are made the *Magnalia* of Christian Religion, and such as give the only Character or Discriminative Indication of the Christian Religion.

2. And consequently all the greatest part of that stress and fervour of mind, which should be employed in those great weighty Substantials of Christianity, runs out and spends it self in those little Collaterals, and Superstructions, and Additaments, some placing the greatest earnestness and intention, contention of mind to have them, and some placing the intension and fervour of their mind to be without them, not unlike those old Contentions between the *Eastern* and *Western* Churches touching the time of the Paschal Observation, one Party excommunicating the other for their dissent, as if the whole weight and stress of the Christian Religion lay in those little Additaments.

3. And hereupon there arise Schismes, Factions, and personal Animosities, Discrimination of Parties, Censurousness, and studied estrangings of Professors of Christianity, oftentimes one Party declining those Practices which are good and commendable in the other, to keep their distances the more irreconcilable, and each Party elouncing some odd Discriminating Habits, Modes; and sometimes also by Opinions in matters of Religion, that may estrange and discriminate them each from the other; and these Opinions though of little moment or consequence (it may be whether true or false) are advanced up into little less than Articles of Faith, for the sake of this Discrimination, when possibly they are of little moment whether they be assented unto or not, of less certainty, and have little or no influence or concern in the Substance of Christian Doctrine.

4. And hereupon it oftentimes comes to pass that not only the common Bond of Charity and Christian Love is broken between the Professors of the same substantials in Christianity,

Christianity, but there is most ordinarily much more Severity, and Persecution, and Implacableness, and Irreconcileableness, more endeavours to undermine, and supplant, and disgrace Dissenters, more scorns, and vilifying, and reproach, and insolence one towards another in their vicissitudes of advantage, than there is between Professors of Christianity, and men of the most loose and profane lives, between Orthodox and Heretiques, nay between Christians and Turks, or Infidels many times.

5. And from this there ariseth a most fruitful and a most inevitable increase of Atheism and contempt of Religion, in many of the Spectators of this Game among Professors of the Christian Religion, and that upon these two Accounts: Principally, because when they hear each Party declare (as they must if they declare truth) in their Sermons and Writings, that the Doctrine of Christianity enjoynes *Mutual Love, Condescension, Charity, Gentleness, Meekness,* and yet so little practised by Dissenting Parties, men are apt to conclude, that either these persons do not believe what they pretend to preach and publish, or that the Doctrine of Christianity was a Notion and Speculation, and never intended as a necessary Rule of Practice, since the greatest Pretenders to the Religion of Christ practise so little of it.

2. Because when men see that those little Superstructi-  
ons and Additions are by the one side *prosecuted*, and on the  
other side *decryed*, with as much animosity, fervour and  
severities, as the most weighty and important Truths and  
Precepts of Evangelical Faith and Obedience, Spectators and  
By-standers think that they are all of the same value; and  
when they see that these things which every sober considerate man must needs conclude little, and of no moment, are  
rated at so great a value by the contesting Parties of each  
side, Truths then are doubted of in relation to these: It  
makes men call in question great matters, when they see such  
small things pursued or declined with no less Fervour and A-  
nimosity than if they were of the greatest.

And

And considering these unhappy Consequences of these fervours of minds touching these small Appendixes and Superstruc[t]ions, even more than about, or concerning the very weighty things of the Gospel, I have endeavoured to search out the Reason how this strong Distemper comes to pass ; and there seems to be these Causes thereof.

1. Ordinarily a man is more fond of, and concerned for something that is *his own*, than for that which is *of God* ; as we are transported with a Love to *ourselves*, so we are transported with a love and admiration of what is *our own* : and hence it is that the weightier and more important Duties enjoined by Christ, partake less of our zeal, or courage, or intension of mind, than our *own little Fantasies* and *Inventions*.

2. *Pride, Credit, and Reputation* are commonly engaged in either Party in the things contested, when they are once contested ; and these are violent and preiling Interests and Motions.

3. The *Plainest Truth and Purity* of Religion is a thing that seldom *pleaseth and suteth to the Curiosity and Appetite of Men*; they are always fond of something Annexed or Appendicated to Religion to make it pleasing to their Appetite. A certain Sawee that may entertain their Fancy, after which it may run, and wherein it may please it self. And these Sawcesto Religion are various, and variously pleasing, according to the Various Inclinations of Men : Most ordinarily the Fancies of men affect some things Splendid and Sensible to be Superadded to Religion ; the *Israelites* would needs have gods that might go before them ; and in compliance with this Humour, most of the Strange Modes and Gesticulations among the Heathens, and most of the Superstitions, Ceremonies and Rites among the Papists were invented.

Again, sometimes the Humour of the People runs in the other

other Extreme, either they will have nothing of Form or Order, or all such Forms or Orders as are extremely opposite to what others use, and place their delight and complacency therein : And by this means oftentimes it comes to pass, that men are carried with greater earnestness and vehemence after those *Placentia*, the entertainments of their fancies, than to the true Substance of Religion it self.

4. Oftentimes it comes to pass that there are two very jealous *Concerns*, and impatient of any Corrival, that are ingaged each against other in these different and dissenting Practices, relating to Collaterals in Religion : On the one side, *Power and Authority* is very tender of its own Interest, and jealous of a Competitor or Rival : On the other side, *Conscience and Perswasion* either of the *Necessity* or *Unlawfulness* of any thing, is very jealous, or fearful, and suspicious of any thing that might injure it : And whether the Conscience be mistaken or not, yet so long as its Perswasion, that is entertained *sub ratione conscientiae*, prevails, this jealousy will still prevail in the mind ; and it many times falls out that *Authority* on the one hand is impatient, or at least jealous of Opposition, and *Conscience* on the other hand restless and unquiet.

5. And the difficulty is so much the greater, because each seems to derive their obliging Authority from God ; the Magistrate recognizing God Almighty as the Fountain, Root, and Foundation of his Power ; and the Conscience supposed to be the Vicegerent of God in the Soul.

6. But that which admirably keeps up these differences, is that men on each side, deal not one with another *calmly*, *mildly*, or upon the Reasons of the things, or upon a true way of Reasoning, Debating, and Arguing of things, or prudent Considerations that might invite yielding on the one side, or accommodations of the other, but each Party takes in all those Contributions, Assurances, and Advantages, that

commonly accompany the worst of Contentions.

For instance, 1. Extremity of Passion and Indignation, 2. Violence and Bitterness of Writings and Speeches, 3. Each Party rendering the other as odious and ridiculous as is possible : 4. Scoffing, jeering, and personal reflections : 5. Artifices and Designs each to catch and undermine the other : 6. An industrious and willing mis-interpretation of each others Words, Writings, and Actions, and raising them to odious Inferences and Consequences, beyond what they were meant, or really and truly bear. 7. Disingenuous Quotations out of each other, without those ordinary Remedies that might be allowed by comparing of other parts of their Writings.

These and the like Auxiliaries are on each part taken into these Velitations between Christians, and in relation to things contended for or against in these Differences, whereas the whole tenour of the Doctrine of Christianity, as it was delivered by Christ and his Apostles, decries nothing more than Anger, Wrath, Malice, Railing, Evil-speaking, Backbiting Slanders, Reproches, Names and Epithets of Scorns, Craft, and Subtilty ; yet all thiese black Legions are called, used, and employed in the management of that Cause, which each Party pretends to be the Cause of Christ ; as if Fiends, and Furies, and Legions of Devils were thought fit Auxiliaries on each Party, wherein both pretend the interest of Christ Jesus.

And that this is so, let any man but read those Books whith have flown abroad from either Party, he will find it evident in all the Contentions of this nature : Witness on the one part *Martin Marprelate*, the *Odious Centuries* put out by Mr. White in the beginning of the Long Parliament, the frequent Invectives and odious Epithets given to Liturgy, to the Bishops, Conforming Ministers, and to the *Church of England* it self, as Antichristian, Idolatrous, *Babylonish*,

*Babylonish*, and a thousand such Names and Stiles.

And on the other side there have been many that have not been behind hand with bitter Invectives, Scornful and mocking Expressions and Appellations, odious Reflections, unnecessary to be repeated. By all which these two things are evident,

1. That these Transports of either side come not from that Spirit which Christ brought with him into the world, and which he commanded and left to his Disciples and Followers; namely, a Spirit of Love, of Charity, of Gentleness, Patience, Kindness, and Sweetness of disposition.

2. That if men go about to justify this, because first provoked by the adverse Party, and so justify it by the Law of Taliation, these men do not remember that as on the one hand the Duty of Christians is Self-denial, Moderation, and Peaceableness; on the other side, that a Spirit of Revenge, an Eye for an Eye, a Tooth for a Tooth, is as much against the Doctrine of Christ, as any thing in the world.

Therefore certainly it becomes those of either Party either to casheer these black Auxiliaries of their Wars, and Contentions of this kind, or otherwise for the sake and honour of Christ and the Christian Religion, plainly declare that he is not concerned in the Contest, but that the Contest is a Contest of *Interest* and *Vain-Glory*, of *Pride* and *Ambition*, and *Reputation*, and *desire of Victory*; Or if they will not declare so much to the World, yet they must give leave to the Spectators to judge of it so.

Now these bitternesses and virulentnesses of either side, have been commonly of two kinds: first, such as reflect, if not all together, yet most of all, upon the *Persons* of their Adversaries. 2. Or such as reflect only upon the *Matters* in difference between them; both were bad enough, and such as serve to make the Differences and Breaches wider.

But of late times, I know not by what unhappy Star,

there hath prevailed more than formerly, certain Inventions that have gone much farther, even to the rending of *Religion it self*, and *Scripture Expressions* ridiculous, and pieces of railery ; and I could have wished that some late Books, put out under the fashion of *Dialogues*, and some other Books of that kind, had not been too Guilty of this fault.

I do remember when *Ben. Johnson* made his Play of the Alchymist, wherein he brings in *Anartas* in derision of the persons then called *Puritans*, with many of their Phrases in use among them, taken out of the Scriptures ; with a design to render that sort of persons ridiculous, and to gain applause to his wit and fancy. But although those persons were not in very good esteem among the Great Ones and Gallants, yet the Play was disliked, and indeed abhorred, because it seemed to reproach Religion it self, though intended only to render the Puritans ridiculous. That which was uncomely and unseemly in a Poet, who made it his busines to make Plays, certainly is much more fulsom and unsavoury in another ; especially if the Author be a *Clergy-man*, as I suppose he is : for of all men in the world it becomes such *prospicere honori Religionis Christianæ*, and not to render it ridiculous and contemptible, by railery and scurrilous jeasting.

And yet I do not find in all *Ben. Johnson's Alchymist* one half of those ridiculous and unseemly repetitions of Scripture Phrases and Expressions, as well as mimical imitations and disdainful mockings of those Persons, and that Party whom he designs to disparage : Scarce a Page but some unhandsom mention of the *Spirit*, and *Christ* and *Grace*, and *Saints*, and some Scripture Expressions : And if it shall be said that he doth it but only in exprobation of such persons as abused or misapplyed such expressions, and it is not with intent to reproach the Scripture or those Phrases that

are

are desumed from it, but to shew the boldness and mistakes of them that have misapplied or abused them.

I answer, That these Misapplications and inconsiderate Uses of Scripture-phrases by them, though it be justly reprovable, yet it is far more intollerable in him. Though their mistakes were weak and foolish, yet they were *serious* in those very mistakes ; but this man industriously and designedly makes the *Expression ridiculous* and contemptible. 2. Their Abuses of Scriptures and Scripture-phrases will not at all justify the like in him, though in another kind, and to another end ; he might have learned to have avoided the folly and inconsiderateness of the others, and not have multipliied it in himself by a worse Method of abuse.

Certainly, who ever he was that made these *Conferences*, I dare say he hath no such pattern of writing from the Apostles or Fathers. The nearest Copy that I know of it, is the *A*— and though he seems a man of Wit and Learning, and possibly would be some body in the world, I dare say they that cherish him in the main of his design are ashamed of his scurrility, and wish it had been spared, and so perchance may he be when more years have better consideration. The mischiefs that come by this manner of writing are very great and many.

1. It makes Differences irreconcilable. When Differences Civil or Ecclesiastical in Judgment or Practice happen, gentleness, softnes, mildness, and personal respectfulness quiet the Passions and Spirits of the adverse Party, gain upon him, get within him ; and when the person is thus won, and over-matched with Sweetnes and Kindnes, and personal Jealousies and Prejudices removed, Perswasions and Arguments grow prevalent, come with their full weight, are entertained calmly, and considerately, and insensibly gain grounds even upon the judgment : But I yet  
never

knew any man converted by an angry, passionate, railing Adversary, for such kind of behaviour presently raiseth in the Adversary the like Passions and Prejudice, and makes the Distance greater ; and the Passions being ingaged in the quarrel, the Judgments of both sides are lost, or blinded, or silenced with the dust and noise of passionate digladiations ; and indeed considering how apparently and evidently such kind of dealing between Dissenters renders compositions almost impossible ; and yet observing how much this course of reviling, and opprobrious, and unmanly as well as unchristian Language, is in practise, I thought that it hath been a real design to render each Party odious and irreconcilable to the other, and the hopes of composition desperate : For who can ever expect that any man, or any sort of men, should be drawn over to that Party that shall publickly stile him *brain-sick*, a *fool*, *filly*, *hypocrite*, *fanatique*, and a hundred such scornful Appellations ; or that men will be easily drawn to relinquish those Opinions or Perswasions when they must thereby in effect subscribe to such Epithetes and Appellations before all the world ; and of all things in the world men can with the least patience bear reflection upon their intellectuals, and are most irreconcilable to them that traduce or abuse them therein.

2. It greatly disadvantageth the *Cause*, as well as the *Persons* of those that use this method amongst sober indifferent Observers, who will be ready to conclude them a parcel of people transported by passions, weak, and prejudiced ; and look upon such a Cause as is maintained by railing, scoffing, raillery, and unproved Calumnies, as weak, and standing in need of such rudenesses to support and maintain it.

3. It exposeth Religion it self to the derision of Atheists, and confirms them in their Atheisms, and gains them too many

many Proselytes; and that principally upon these Reasons, 1. Because they find that Clergy-men do tell them in the Pulpits, that Christ himself and his Apostles condemned railing, scandalous Appellation, as *Raca*, and *Fool, Evil-speaking, foolish-leaving, Mocking, Reviling*; This they tell men, and they tell them truly, and yet these very men that call themselves Ministers of Christ, Messengers of the Gospel of Peace, take that admirable liberty of reproaching, scoffing, and deriding one another in their publick Pamphlets and Discourses, that can scarce be exampled among the most invective Ranks of Persons, whose trade it is to be Sarcitical, and render people ridiculous. Nay so far hath this Excellent manage prevail'd among Clergy-men, that their Scoffs and Reproaches are not levelled at the Persons, or Personal Defects of Dissenters, but rather than want supports for their Party, will have ugly flings at Religion it self, at Scripture-expressions; and when men see such a course of Practice among the Preachers and Clergy-men, they are ready to conclude, that surely they believe not themselves what they preach to others; therefore think they have a fair pretence not to believe them.

2. But principally these great Animosities and Transports of dissenting Clergy-men, confirms and promotes Atheisme, upon this account, that the things about which this wonderful hate is strucken between these Parties, are such as both Parties agree to be none of the Fundamentals of the Religion professed by both, but Accessaries and Accessions, and such indeed as By-standers think are of very small moment, and yet when men see so much heat and passion, so much fervour and contention, such reproaches and revilings, such *exasperations* of Authority on either Party, such mutual Prosecutions one of another, that more could not possibly be done between:

tween Dissenters in those points which both agree to be Fundamental, Atheistical spirits are apt to conclude, that probably those points, that both sides supposed to be of greater moment, are *eiusdem farinae*, with those in Contest, since they are not, nor cannot be prosecuted with greater fervour, than these which all men take to be small and inconsiderable, and that it is Interest, Vain-glory, and Applause, or some other Temporal Concern, that gives this Fervour and Zeal in Matters of Religion, more than the true Concerns of it self. The Conclusion therefore is, That men for their own sakes, and for the sake and honour of the Christian Religion, would use more Temperance, Prudence, and Moderation, in Contests about Circumstantial.

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Sir

*Sir. Francis Bacon Lord Verulam,  
Viscount St. Albans and Lord Chan-  
cellor aster, in his Advertisement of the  
Controversies, of the Church of Eng-  
land, pag. 138. of his Works.*

**T**He wrongs of them who are possessed of the Government of the Church, towards the other, may hardly be dissembled, or excused: They have charged them as tho' they denied tribute to *Cæsar*, and withdrew from the Civil Magistrate, the obedience which they have ever performed and taught.

*I have oft transcribed Bishop Andrews Confident Assertion of the Loyalty of those then called Puritans, against the Papists accusation, in his Tortura Torti.*

They have sorted and coupled them with the Family of Love, whose Heresie they have labour'd to destroy and confute. They have been swift of Credit to receive accusations against them, from those that have quarrelled with them, but for speaking against sin and Vice. Their Accusations and Inquisitions have been strict, Swearing men to Blanks and Generalities, not included within compas of Matter certain; Which the Party which is to take the Oath, may Comprehend to be a thing captious and strenible. Their urging Subscription to their own Articlos, is but *Laceffere & irritare morbos Ecclesiae*; Which otherwise would spend themselves: *Non Consensum querit sed dissidium, qui quod faltis præstatur, in verbis exigit. He seeketh not Unity but*

*Division, who exacteth that in words, which we are content  
to yield in Action.*

And it is true, that there are some, who (I am perswaded) will not easily offend by inconformity, who notwithstanding make some Conscience to subscribe: For they know this Note of Inconstancy and Defection from what they have long held, shall dissable them to do that good, which otherwise they might do. For such is the weakness of many, that their Ministry should be thereby discredited \*. As for their easie silencing them in so great scarcity of Preachers, it is to *Punish the People*, and not *Them*. Ought they not (I mean the Bishops) to keep one eye open, to look upon the good that the men do, but to fix them *both* upon the hurt that *they suppose* cometh by them? Indeed such as are *Intemperate and Incorrigible*, God forbid they should be permitted to preach: But shall every inconsiderate word, somtimes captiously watched, and for the most part hardly enforced, be as a forfeiture of their Voice and Gift in preaching?

\* I never  
met with any  
that have  
forborn sub-  
scription on  
no greater  
reason than  
this.

As for sundry particular molestations, I take no pleasure to recite them. If a Minister shall be troubled for saying in Baptisme (*Do you believe*) for (*Dost thou believe*) If another shall be call'd in question, for praying for her Majesty, without the additions of her Stile. Whereas the very Form of Prayer in the Common-prayer-book hath (*Thy servant Elizabeth*) and no more: If a third shall be accused on these words uttered touching the Controversies, *Tollatur Lex ut fiat certamen*, (whereby was meant that the prejudice of the Law removed, eithers reasons should be equally compared) of calling the people to *Sedition* and *Mutiny*, as if he had said, *Away with the Law, and try it out with Force*; If these and other like particulars be true, which I have but

but by Rumor, and cannot affirm ; it is to be lamented that they should labour among us with so little Comfort—The wrath of man worketh not the Righteousness of God.

*Thus far this conformable Learned Lawyer.*

*The said Lord Verulam in his Considerations for the better Pacification and Edification of the Church of England, Pag. 180. &c. of his Works.*

He first answers the Objection that [*It is against good Policie to Innovate any thing in Church-matters*] : And praising the Church, addeth, pag. 182. *But for the Discipline and Orders of the Church ; as many, and the Chief of them, are Holy and Good ; so yet if Saint John were to indite an Epistle to the Church of England, as he did to them of Asia, it would sure have the Clause, Habeo adversus te pauca.*

And he saith, pag. 183. *That there should be one Form of Discipline in all Churches, and that imposed by necessity of a commandment and prescript out of the word of God ; It is a matter Volumes have been compiled of, and therefore cannot receive a brief redargution ; I for my part do confess that in revolving the Scriptures, I could never find any such thing ; but that God had left the like liberty to the Church Government, to be varied according to the Time, and Place, and Accidents ; which nevertheless his high and Divine Providence doth Order and dispose. For all Civil Governments are restrained from God, unto the General Grounds of Justice and Manners. But the Policies and Forms of them are left free ; So that Monarchies and Kingdoms, Senates and Seigniories, Popular States and Communalties, are lawful ; and*

where they are planted ought to be maintained inviolate.

So likewise in *Church* matters, the *Substance of Doctrine* is *immutable*: And so are the *General Rules of Government*: But for *Rites* and *Ceremonies*, and for the *particular Hierarchies, Policies, and Discipline* of Churches, they be left at large.

And therefore it is good that we *return to the ancient bounds of Unity in the Church of God*: which was, *One Faith, One Baptism*; and not *One Hierarchy, One Discipline*: And that we observe the *League of Christians* as it is penned by our *Saviour*; which is, in *substance of Doctrine* this, [*He that is not with us is against us.*] But in things *Indifferent* and of *Circumstance*, this [*He that is not against us is with us.*]

In these things, so as the General rule be observed, [*That Christs flock be fed: That there be a succession in Bishops and Ministers, which are the Prophets of the New Testament; That there be a due and reverent use of the Power of the Keyes; That those that preach the Gospel, live of the Gospel; That all things tend to Edification; That all things be done in order, and with decency, and the like,*] The rest is left to Holy Wisdom, and spiritual discretion of the Master-BUILDER, and Inferior Builders in Christs Church. As it is excellently alluded by that Father that noted that Christs Garment was without Seam; and yet the Churches Garment was of divers Colours: And setsdown as a rule: *In veste varietas fit; scissura non fit.*

Pag. 134. For the Government of Bishops, I for my part, not prejudging the Presidents of other reformed Churches, do hold it *warranted* by the Word of God, and by the Practice of the ancient Church in the better times; and much more Convenient for Kingdoms than *Parity of Ministers, and Government by Synods.* But there  
be

be two Circumstances in the Administration of Bishops, wherein I confess I could never be satisfied: The One, *The sole exercise of their Authority*: The other, *The Deputation of their Authority*.

For the first, The Bishop giveth *Orders alone*, *Excommunicateth alone*, *Judgeth alone*: This seemeth to be a thing almost without Example in good Government, and therefore not unlikely to have crept in in the degenerate and corrupt time: We see the greatest Kings and Monarchs have their Councils: There is no Temporal Court in *England* of the higher sort, where the Authority doth rest in one person. The Kings-Bench, the Common-pleas, and the Exchequer, are Benches of a certain Number of Judges. The Chancellor of *England*, hath the Assistance of twelve Masters of the *Chancery*. &c. The like is to be found in all well-govern'd Commonwealths abroad, where the Jurisdiction is more dispersed: As in the Court of Parliament of *France*, and in other places.

No man will deny, but the Acts that passe the Bishops Jurisdiction, are of as great importance as those that pass the Civil Courts: For mens Souls are more precious than their Bodies or Goods: And so are their Good-names: Bishops have their infirmities; and have no exception from that general Malediction, pronounced against all Men living: *Vie Soli, nam si occident*, &c. Nay we see that the first Warrant in Spiritual Causes is directed to a Number, *Dic Ecclesiæ*, which is not so in Temporal Matters, *Ab initio non sicut sic*.

For the second Point, which is the *Deputation of their Authority*, I see no perfect nor sure ground for that neither. Being somewhat different from the Examples and Rules of Government. The Bishop exerciseth his Jurisdiction by his Chancellour and Commissary, Official, &c. We see in all Laws in the world, *Offices of Confidence and Skill* can-  
not.

not be put over and exercised by Deputy, except it be specially contained in the Original Grant. And in that Case it is dutiful. And for experience, there was never any Chancellour of *England* made a Deputy : There was never any Judge in any Court made a Deputy : The Bishop is a Judge, and of a high nature : whence cometh it that he should depute ? Considering that all Trust and Confidence is personal and inherent ; and cannot, nor ought not be transposed. Surely in this again *Ab initio non fuit sic.* But it is probable, that Bishops when they gave themselves too much to the glory of the world, and became Grandees in Kingdoms, and great Counsellours to Princes, then did they delegate their proper Jurisdictions, as things of too inferior Nature for their Greatness ; And then after the similitude of Kings and Count Palatines, they would have their Chancellours and Judges.

But the Example of Kings and Potentates giveth no good defence : For the Reason why Kings administer by their Judges, tho' themselves are suprem Judges, are two : The One, because the Offices of Kings are for the most part of Inheritance. And it is a Rule in all Laws, that offices of inheritance, are rather matters that ground in Interest than in Confidence, for as much as they may fall upon Women, upon Infants, upon Lunaticks and Idiots, Persons uncapable to execute Judicature in person. And therefore such Offices, by all Laws, might ever be exercised and administrated by delegation. The second reason is, because of the Amplitude of their Jurisdictions, &c. There is a third reason, tho' not much to the present purpose, that Kings, either in respect of the Common-wealth, or of the Greatnes of their own Patrimonies, are usually Parties in Suites : And then their Judges stand indifferent between them and their Subjects. But in the Case of Bishops none of these Reasons hold : For first, their Office is

elective and for life, and not patrimonial or hereditary: An Office meerly of *Confidence*, *Science*, and *Qualification*, &c. See the rest.

Page. 185, 186. The Cap and Surplice since they be things in their Nature indifferent, and yet by some held Superstitious, and that the Question is between *Science* and *Conscience*, it seemeth to fall within the compass of the Apostles Rule, which is, that the stronger do descend and yield to the weaker, &c. [lege cætera] The rather because the silencing of Ministers on this occasion, is in this scarcity of good Preachers, a punishment that ligheth on the people, as well as on the party.

And for the *Subscription*, it seemeth to me in the Nature of a Confession, and therefore more proper to bind in the *Unity of Faith*, and to be urged rather for *Articles of Doctrine*, than for *Rites and Ceremonies*, and Points of outward Government. For howsoever publick Considerations and Reasons of State may require Uniformity, yet *Christian and Divine Grounds* look chiefly upon Unity.

See what he saith pag. 191. for A. Bishop Grindals way of Lectures to young Ministers, to teach them to preach well. And p. 192 of the abuse of Excommunication.

*An Animadversion of the Transcriber.*

Qu. *Why was this great man so much against Bishops deputing their proper work to Chancellours, Commissaries, Officers? &c.*

Anf. It's easie to conjecture,

I. Tho' he thought the accidental Modes of Church-Government mutable and humane, yet most Christians with him judge, that the *Essentials* of *Church Office* are of Divine Institution, and therefore fixed on the proper Officers: And that no Lay-man may by Deputation administer Sacraments, or the Church Keyes.

II. And

II. And so he would not have Lay-men and the Clergie confounded, as if there were nothing proper to the Pastoral Office, lest it teach the Laity Sacrilegious Usurpation. The *Office* is nothing but a conjunction of *Obligation* and *Authority* to do the works: And if a Lay-man have these two, he is a Bishop.

III. The very confounding of the *Bishops Office* and the *Presbyters*, seemeth so ill to many, that they think even a Presbyter (Archdeacon or Chancellor) may not be deputed to the work of the Bishop, because that maketh him a Bishop, much less may a Lay-man.

IV. Many would not have the *King* or *Civil Magistrate* made properly a Bishop, and so the Offices Confounded: But say they, If commissioning another to Judge by the Keyes, or to administer Sacraments, be proper to a Bishop, then Kings and Magistrates are Bishops; for they may send and Commission other men to do all this.

V. The *Bishops personal doing of all his own proper Office-works*, would answer almost all that the moderate Nonconformists desire in Church Government: For then,

1. The Keyes we hope would be used in a Sacred serious manner, with due Admonition, Instruction, Exhortation, Prayer, &c. which might melt a Sinner into Repentance.

2. And then Experience would fully satisfie the Diocessans that they *must needs have Bishops under them*, or besides them, at least in every great Town, with the adjoining Parishes: For by that time they had duly *Confirmed all* before *Communicating*, and had *examined, exhorted, and judged the many hundred Scandalous Persons* that in a Diocels would be presented, I'll warrant you they would be glad of the help of many: And though perhaps Church-Wardens would not present all that come not to Church, in the Parishes where many Score thousands keep away for

for want of room, or on that pretence ; yet good Ministers would present more than now they do, when they saw it would tend to a sacred use of the Keyes, and mens repentance. *Bucer's* desire of Parish Discipline, would be sure more performed, which would end most Church Controversies,

VI. And this would bring in many Nonconformists, who now stand out, because they dare not make *a Covenant, an Oath*, never in their places to endeavour any alteration of *Church Government*, because they think *Lay Chancellours use of the Keyes decretively unlawful*. And dare not swear Obedience to such Ordinances ; nor yet own the Omission of Discipline which the paucity of Bishops unavoidably inferreth, while a Diocese hath but one. (Experience would certainly cure that).

VII. And it moveth some, that we yet meet with few Bishops that will defend lay Chancellours decretive use of the Keyes ; but seem to wish it were reformed.

VIII. And the Chancellours and Civilians have little reason to be offended with my Lord *Vernam*, and such men : For he would allow them the probate of Wills, and Matrimonial Cases, and all that belongeth to an Official Magistrate, that hath his Office from the King. And no doubt would consent that they have a moderate Power by mults to constrain men to submit to their Courts, instead of the use of Excommunications and Absolutions.

They say this is otherwise in *Scotland* now. And yet they are sworn not to endeavour any alteration of *Church Government*.

And I hope none will be angry with this Learned great man, for the blame which he layeth on the Bishops usage of the Non-Conformists ; even before the

present Cartons were made. Since, 1. His Letters shew him to have been a man extraordinarily humbling himself both to the Queen and to the Bishops. 2. And the most approved Historians tell us, to our great grief, that such things have been no wonders and rarities, these thirteen hundred years. It is holy and credible men that tell us, how St. Martin, notwithstanding all his Miracles and holiness, was used by the *Synods* of Bishops in his time, for being so strict of life, and so much against the using of the Sword against the *Priscilian Gnostick Hereticks*.

And it is as holy and credible men that tell us how St. *Theophilus Alexander*, a Patriarch, envyed and used his Superior Patriarch, holy *Chrysostome*, and even long studiéd his ruine: And how another called St. *Epiphanius*, seditiously came out of *Cyprus*, and affronted him at *Constantinople*, in his own Church, requiring him irregularly before all the People, to Curse *Origen* or his Writings; as if the Bishop of the *Isle of Man* should come and magisterially impose this on the Bishop of *London* or *Canterbury*, in the Congregation where he preach'd. They tell us how readily the Synods of Bishops Condemned *Chrysostome*, because the Emperour and Empress were against him: And if so excellent and holy a man, whose language and life excelled them all, could not escape condemnation twice over, and that in the Age of the Church which is predicated for the very best and happiest that ever was since the days of Christ; If the Primacy among all the four Eastern Patriarchs, and his own rare Parts, and holiness and innocency, could not secure him from ejection and banishment from a famous Christian Emperour, and the Convocations of Bishops that envyyed his holiness and parts; If when he was banished, his stable constant flock, that would not renounce

nounce him, were made Conventiclers, and named *Joannits*, as a note of Schismatical Separatists, while those that turned to the next possessour were called the Church. If another Saint of greatest Learning, Name and Power, resisted the very restoring of his name when he was dead, saying the Canons were not to be broken to satisfie the Schismatical *Joannits*, whom nothing will satisfie, and that it would discourage the Conformists; I mean St. Cyril of *Alexandria*; why should it be thought that men far inferiour to *Brycestome*, that live not in so pure an Age, should by the Clergie stream and power, be much like esteemed, and partly used.

And if in those Ages of the Churches greatest excellency (the 4th. and 5th. Centuries) the great Patriarchs themselves of *Alexandria*, *Antioch*, *Constantinople*, &c. who are supposed by some to be the Pillars of the Church for Government and Unity, did live almost in continual Conflict, Cursing, or casting out each other as Hereticks, or Schismaticks, and oft fighting it out in Christian blood, (to say nothing of the following worser Ages) what wonder, if still the old Causes succeeding produce many of the old Effects: Which a man that was thought wise enough to be the Lord Chancellour of *England*, and the famous restorer of Learning, might be allowed gently to touch, while the Clergy themselves openly and greatly preser those Ages, and the *Theophilus's*, *Epiphanius's*, and *Cyril's*, and Episcopal Synods thereof, before our owne, and before themselves.

Let us hear what one more excellent person, and no Fanatick or Schismatick saith,

Dr. *Isaac Barrow* (a man, if ever this Age had any, that delivered digested TRUTH in clear Expressions) vol.

2. p. 34.

"Whoever indeed will consider the Nature of man,

" or will consult obvious experience, shall find that in practical matters, our *will* or *appetite* hath a mighty influence on our *Judgment* of things, causing men with great attention to regard that which they affect, and carefully to mark all reasons making for it; but averting from that which they dislike, and making them to overlook the arguments which persuade it: whence men generally do suit their opinions to their inclinations; warping to that side where their *INTEREST* doth lye; or to which their Complexions, their Humor, their Passions, their Pleasure, their ease doth sway them; So that almost any Notion will seem true, which is *Profitable*, which is *Safe*, which is *Pleasant*, or any way grateful to them; and that Notion *false*, which in any such respect doth cross them. Very few can abstract their minds from such considerations, or embrace *Pure Truth* divested of them. And those few who do so, must therein most employ their *Will*, by strong effects of Voluntary resolution, and patience, and disengaging their minds from those clogs and byasses.

" This is particularly notorious in mens adhering to *Parties*, divided in opinion, which is so regulated by that sort of causes, that if you do mark what any mans *Temper* is, and where his *INTEREST* lyeth, you may easily prognosticate on what side he will be; and with what degree of Seriousness, of Vigour, of Zeal, he will cleave thereto. A timerous man you may be almost sure will be on the safer side: A *Covetous* man will bend to that Party where *Gain* is to be had. An *Ambitious* man will close with the opinion passing in *Court*. A *careless* man will comply with the *fashion*: Affection arising from *Education* or *Prejudice* will hold others stiff. Few follow the results of *Impartial Contemplation*.

And pag. 483. " There is one Lawgiver who can save and

" and destroy : *Who art thou that Judgest another?* That is,  
 " How intollerably Rash, Unjust and arrogant art thou,  
 " who settest thy self on Gods Tribunal, and thence dost ad-  
 " venture to pronounce Doom upon his People? Did we  
 " well consider Gods Judgment, we should rather think it  
 " adviseable to be mindful of our own Case, than to pass  
 " Sentence on that of others: Observing how lyable our  
 " selves are, we should scarce have a Heart to Carp at o-  
 " thers; finding what great need our actions will then have  
 " of a Favourable Interpretation, we should sure be more  
 " candid and mild in Censuring other mens Actions: Special-  
 " ly considering, that by harsh Judgment of others, we  
 " make our own Case worse, and inflame our reckoning:  
 " We directly thence incur Guilt, we aggravate our own  
 " Offences, and render our selves unexcusable; we expose our  
 " selves on that score to Condemnation. See *Mat. 7. 2. Luk.*  
*6. 37. Rom. 2. 2, 3. Jam. 5. 9.*

His two Sermons on *Ro. 12. 18.* well practised, would heal *England's* Divisions.

Such also is his Sermon of Love to our Neighbour, that against Slander, and that against Detraction: But that which I cite him for, is the very same description of Religion which Judge *Hale* giveth. *Serm. 1. p. 10.*

" The Principal advantage of Wisdom, is its acquaint-  
 " ing us with the Nature and Reason of true Religion,  
 " and affording Convictive Arguments to perswade the  
 " Practice of it: Which is accompanied with the purest de-  
 " light, and attended with the most solid content imagina-  
 " ble: I say, the Nature of Religion, wherein it Consists, and  
 " what it requires: The mistake of which produceth daily  
 " so many mischiefs and inconveniences in the World, and  
 " exposeth so good a Name to so much Reproach. It shew-  
 " eth it consisteth not in fair professions and glorious pre-  
 " tences,

" tences, but in Real Practice ; not in a pertinacious adherence to *ANY* Sect, or Party, but in a sincere Love of Goodness, and dislike of Naughtiness wherever discerning it self ; not in Vain Ostentations and Flourishes of outward performance, but in an inward good complexion of Mind, exerting it self in Works of true *Devotion* and *Charity*, not in a Nice Orthodoxy, or *Politick Subjection* of our Judgments to the peremptory dictates of Men ; but in a sincere Love of Truth, and hearty approbation and compliance with the *Doctrines Fundamentally Good and Necessary* to be believed : Not in harsh censuring and virulently inveighing against others, but in careful amending our own ways : Not in a peevish crossness and obstinate Repugnancy to received Laws and Customs; but in a quiet and Peaceable Submission to the express Laws of God, and Lawful Commands of Men : Not in a furious Zeal FOR or AGAINST trivial Circumstances, but in a conscientiable practising the substantial parts of Religion : Not in a frequent talking, or contentious disputing about it ; but in a ready observance of the unquestionable Rules and Precepts of it. In a Word, True Religion consists in nothing else, but doing what becomes our Relation to God, in a Conformity or similitude to his Nature, and in a willing Obedience to his Holy Will, to which by potent incentives it allures and persuades us, by representing to us his transcendent glorious Attributes— &c. See the rest, too long to be transcribed.

If you say, *A Papist will own all this.* I answer, 1. So much the better : We will not feign a new Christianity to differ from Papists. 2. But do they not own too much more ? How then come they to fill the World with Blood and Division, for the Sake of their numerous humane Additionals ?

I know

I know no man that hath more fully confuted that Sect than he hath done in his *Treatise of Supremacy and Church-Unity*: And saith the Publisher of his Life, [He understood Popery both at home and abroad. He had narrowly observed it Militant in England, triumphant in Italy, disguised in France; and had earlier apprehensions of the Approaching Danger, and would have appeared with the forwardest in a needful time.

Whoever will truly confute his *Treatise of the Popes Supremacy*, and that of the *Unity of the Church*, against the Supremacy and Foreign Jurisdiction of Councils called General, I here promise him shall make me a Papist (of the Italian or the Gallicane sort accordingly) if he will do it before I die, and am Disabled from reading and considering it. But I doubt not but the Papists will rather study to bury it in silence, (while they do their works by other means than Reasoning) lest the notice of a Confutation should occasion more to read it: And then, especially if all men in Power should read it, their Cause with such is utterly undone.

Saith Dr. Tillotson in his Preface to it, [I dare say that whoeuer shall carefully peruse this Treatise, will find that this point of the Popes Supremacy (on which Bellarmine bath the confidence to say, The whole of Christianity depends) is not only an indefensible, but an Impudent Cause, as ever was undertaken by learned Pens: And nothing could have kept it so long from becoming ridiculous in the judgment of Mankind, but its being so strongly supported by a worldly interest: For there is not one tolerable argument for it, and there are a thousand invincible Reasons against it.

**I**F these three Testimonies of the most Learned, Wise, and Impartial Conformists, that these (or many) Ages have bred, be all born down by Interest and Supercilious Confidence, and a Flood of Words (which may all be used for the worst Cause in the World) the Lord be Judge, and justify his Truth, and that Wisdom from above, Jam. 3. 17. which is justified of her Children. When Satan hath done his worst, *Blessed are the Peace-makers; for they shall be called the Children of God.* Mat. 5. 9.

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**F I N I S.**

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